

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINAI 02452 311544Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 301630Z DEC 76
FM USMISSION SINAI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1646
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINAI 2452

EXDIS

FOR SSM FOR KONTOS FROM THORNE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS, UN

SUBJECT: JOINT COMMISSION MEETING HELD DECEMBER 28, 1976
AS RECOUNTED SEPARATELY BY JOHN MILES (POLAD TO GEN. SIILASVUO)
AND IDF CHIEF LIAISON OFFICER LEVINSON

1. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION THE NEW ROAD IN BUFFER
ZONE TO BRAVO WILL BE BUILT SO AS TO PARALLEL BUT BE
ENTIRELY SEPARATED FROM THE PRESENT ROAD. EGYPTIANS WILL BUILD
NEW ROAD WHICH WILL THEN BE TURNED OVER TO ISRAELIS FOR THEIR
EXCLUSIVE USE. THE EGYPTIANS WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE USE OF
HHE OLD ROAD. SKETCH MAPS SHOWING PROJECTED ROUTE
OF NEW ROAD THROUGH BUFFER ZONE TWO BRAVO AS WELL AS
EXCERPTS FROM JOINT COMMISSION MEETING NOTES ARE BEING
FORWARDED SEPARATELY TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO AND AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV.

2. ISRAELIS PROPOSED THAT FORMER RESIDENTS OF QUANTARA
NOW LIVING IN AL ARISH BE RETURNED TO EGYPT. EGYPTIANS
AGREED IN PRINCIPLE BUT SAY THAT HHESE PEOPLE MUST BE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINAI 02452 311544Z

QUOTE CHECKED OUT UNQUOTE FIRST.

3. THE EGYPTIANS DISCUSSED THE SUEZ GULF INCIDENT IN WHICH
ISRAELI GUN BOAT ALLEGEDLY SHOT UP MOORINGS FOR USE BY OIL
RESEARCH VESSEL. DISCUSSION WAS IN GENERAL TERMS ONLY AND
NO CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED, OTHER THAN THAH THIS IS A

SUBJECT WHICH CANNOT BE DECIDED IN THE JOINT COMMISSION. COL. LEVINSON FEELS THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE REACTIONS OF OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, IN PARTICULAR SYRIA, TO THE INCIDENT THAN ABOUT THE INCIDENT ITSELF.

4. ISRAELIS RAISED THE ISSUE OF NUMBER OF EGYPTIAN BATTALIONS IN THE LIMITED FORCES ZONE BETWEEN LINES E AND F. DISCUSSION WAS GENERAL AND NOTHING WAS RESOLVED.

5. ISRAELIS RAISED THE ISSUE OF THE ISRAELI BODIES BEING HELD BY THE EGYPTIANS. COL. LEVINSON INDICATED THAT ISRAEL HAS FURNISHED A LIST OF 118 NAMES TO GENERAL SIILASUVO. HE SAID THAT HE POINTED OUT DURING THE MEETING THAT APPROXIMATELY 30 OF THE NAMES REPRESENTED QUOTE TERRORISTS UNQUOTE WHO ARE BEING HELD BECAUSE OF ASSASSINATIONS OR ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATIONS. HE SAID THAT GENERAL MAGDOUB INDICATED EGYPT IS QUOTE NOT INTERESTED UNQUOTE IN THEM. COL. LEVINSON AND GENERAL MAGDOUB DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE AT GREAT LENGTH AND COL. LEVINSON IS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT GENERAL MAGDOUB WILL FURNISH A TIME TABLE TO GENERAL SIILASUVO WITHIN WHICH THE EXCHANGE CAN COMMENCE AND THAT THIS SCHEDULE WILL CONSIST OF SEVERAL STEPS RATHER THAN A ONE TIME EXCHANGE.

6. THE ISRAELIS SUGGESTED THAT AIRCRAFT STRAYING INTO THE BUFFER ZONE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE THERE AS A RESULT OF NAVIGATIONAL ERROR AND NOT A CAUSE OF HOSTILITIES. HE STATED THAT HE PROPOSED SPECIFICALLY THAT BOTH SIDES AGREE THAT AIRCRAFT STRAYING INTO THE BUFFER ZONE WILL NOT BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SINAI 02452 311544Z

FIRE UPON. THERE WAS NO EGYPTIAN REACTION TO THIS.

7. THE ISRAELIS STATED THAT THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT THAT MIGHT PASS OVER THE BUFFER ZONE. TO ENSURE THAT THESE UNARMED AIRCRAFT ARE NOT SHOT AT, THE ISRAELIS PROPOSED THAT A QUOTE HOT LINE UNQUOTE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES SO THAT THE AIR CONTROLLERS OF THE TWO SIDES CAN SPEAK TO EACH OTHER AND GET ANY ERRANT AIRCRAFT BACK ON COURSE. THE EGYPTIANS TOOK THIS UNDER ADVISEMENT.

8. AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WAS HELD CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF A CROSSING POINT FOR BEDOUINS IN THE SOUTH PRIMARILY TO PERMIT BEDOUINS TO ENTER EGYPTIAN TERRITORY OR TO ENTER IDF CONTROLLED TERRITORY ON THEIR EASTWARD MIGRATIONS. THIS WAS DISCUSSED AS A RESULT OF THE LARGELY UNCONTROLLED BEDOUIN INFILTRATION INTO THE SOUTHERN PART OF BUFFER ZONE NUMBER ONE THROUGH THE AREA WHERE THE K LINE AND THE M LINE COME TOGETHER.

THE EGYPTIANS APPEARED INTERESTED BUT HAVE RESERVED ON THIS. COL. LEVINSON INDICATED THAT THE PROPOSAL INCLUDED ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNEF CONTROLLED CHECKPOINT BETWEEN BUT IN SIGHT OF ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN CHECKPOINTS; HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE THREE SEPARATE POINTS.

9. THE ISRAELIS PROPOSED ALTERING THE SHAPE OF THE E-1 SURVEILLANCE SITE SO AS TO INCLUDE ALL THE ROAD FROM HHE E-1 CAMP TO HILL 693 WITHIN IT. THE EGYPTIANS APPEARED INTERESTED BUT NO DECISION WAS TAKEN.

10. THE EGYPTIANS AGAIN VOICED OPPOSITION TO THE DAILY ENTRY BY THE IDF MAINTENANCE TEAM INTO THE BUFFER ZONE TO CHECK THE ISRAELI COMMUNICATIONS CABLE AND WAHER LINE BETWEEN CHECKPOINT CHARLIE AND J-1. THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON THIS BUT THE EGYPTIANS INSISTED THAT THEIR OPPOSITION TO A DAILY MAINTENANCE CHECK BE INCLUDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SINAI 02452 311544Z

11. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE ISRAELI TELEPHONE LINE FROM J-1 TO SFM COULD BE LAID AND CONNECTED AND THAT THE TELEPHONE LINE FROM E-1 TO SFM COULD BE CONNECTED. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD MAINTAIN THEIR LINE TO THE FOOT OF THE ESCARPMENT APPROXIMATELY 800 METERS SOUTH OF THE SFM BASE CAMP. THERE WAS ALSO GENERAL DISCUSSION CONCERNING MAINTENANCE OF THE TELEPHONE LINE FROM J-1 BUT NO AGREEMENT.

12. THE ISRAELIS PROPOSED MORE FREQUENT MEETINGS OF THE JOINT COMMISSION AND SPECIFICALLY THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD MEET AGAIN WITHIN QUOTE TWO OR THREE WEEKS UNQUOTE TO RESOLVE THOSE ITEMS ON WHICH THE EGYPTIANS HAD RESERVED OR APPEARED TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE. NOTHING WAS DECIDED ON THIS.

COMMENT: THE MEETING APPARENTLY WAS AN UNUSUALLY CORDIAL ONE AND LASTED THREE AND ONE HALF HOURS FROM 1130 TO 1500 HOURS INCLUDING LUNCH. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THE FOREGOING IS COL. LEVINSON'S VERSION, THOSE PORTIONS DISCUSSED WITH JOHN MILES, POLITICAL ADVISOR TO COL. SILASUVO, ARE IDENTICAL TO COL. LEVINSON'S. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THAT ITEMS CONCERNING SFM HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. I HAD QUIET CHATS WITH BOTH GENERAL MAGDOUB AND COL. LEVINSON DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS SINCE THEY BOHH INDICATED THAT HHE TWO TELEPHONE LINES WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE JOINT MEETING AND IT WAS APPARENT WHEN THAT EACH PLANNED TO APPROVE CONNECTING THE CABLE OF THE OTHER PARTY, HOWEVER, THIS RAISES THE POINT THAT IN THE FUTURE THERE MAY BE OTHER AGENDA ITEMS AFFECTING SFM WHICH MAY CALL FOR A MORE FORMAL APPROACH TO ENSURE THAT STATUS OF SFM IS NOT AFFECTED.

WHILE I FORESEE NO SUCH ITEM IN THE
NEAR FUTURE, SUGGEST THIS POSSIBILITY BE CONSIDERED NOW. EXPECT
TO RECEIVE EGYPTIAN VERSION OF JOINT COMMISSION MEETING TOMORROW
AT MEETING IN CAIRO WITH SARELO AND WILL REPORT ANY SUBSTANTIVE
DIFFERENCES FROM AMEMBASSY CAIRO.

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CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 05 SINAI 02452 311544Z

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